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REPORT OF THE JOINT UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION COMMITTEE ON ITS TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

(Turin, Italy, 1-3 July 1997)

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION	1 - 2	3
I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION	3	3
II. DISCUSSIONS HELD BY JUNIC	4 - 34	4
A. Discussion of the ways and means of promoting better public understanding of the role and achievements of the United Nations	4 - 7	4
B. Review of ongoing JUNIC projects	8 - 15	5
1. Non-Governmental Liaison Service	8 - 12	5
2. JUNIC Information Exchange Bulletin	13	7
3. System-wide publication on development issues	14 - 15	7
C. Participation by the United Nations system in international expositions	16 - 22	8
1. Lisbon Exposition 1998	16 - 17	8
2. Hannover Exposition 2000	18 - 21	9
3. Revision of ACC Guidelines for the participation of the United Nations system in international expositions	22	10

CONTENTS (continued)

	Paragraphs	Page
D. Review of special events calling for JUNIC participation	23 - 28	10
1. First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)	23	10
2. International Year of the Ocean (1998)	24	11
3. Special session of the United Nations General Assembly on drug issues (1998)	25	11
4. Fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights	26	12
5. Fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping	27	12
6. International Year of Older Persons (1999)	28	12
E. Inter-agency cooperation in audio-visual productions	29	13
1. Progress report on the development of a consolidated direct radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations	29	13
F. Report of the Technical Advisory Group on the use of computer technology in the field of public information	30	13
G. Chairmanship of JUNIC	31	13
H. Dates and venue for the twenty-fourth session	32	14
I. Other matters	33 - 34	14

Annexes

I.	AGENDA	15
II.	LIST OF DOCUMENTS	17
III.	LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	19

INTRODUCTION

1. The Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) held its twenty-third session at the ILO International Training Centre at Turin, Italy, from 1 to 3 July 1997. The agenda for the session, which was adopted at the opening meeting, is contained in annex I to the present report. In the preparation for the session, the JUNIC secretariat collected, processed and disseminated in advance the necessary documentation, a list of which is provided in annex II. The list of participants is contained in annex III.

2. The session was opened by the Chairman of JUNIC, the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information in the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat. The participants were welcomed by the Director of Training and Director of the United Nations Staff College on behalf of the host organization.

I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION

3. The attention of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) is drawn in particular to the following:

(a) The discussion of the ways and means of promoting better public understanding of the role and achievements of the United Nations (paras. 4-7);

(b) The action taken regarding the Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) (paras. 8-12);

(c) The discussion on the JUNIC Information Exchange Bulletin (para. 13);

(d) The discussion on a system-wide publication on development issues (paras. 14 and 15);

(e) The discussion regarding the participation in the Lisbon Exposition 1998 (paras. 16 and 17);

(f) The discussion regarding the participation in the 2000 Exposition Hannover (paras. 18-21);

(g) The discussion regarding the revision of the 1992 ACC Guidelines for participation by the United Nations system in international expositions and the 1994 addendum thereto (para. 22);

(h) The recommendation on the chairmanship of JUNIC for 1998-1999 (para. 31);

(i) The decision on the dates and venue for the twenty-fourth session of JUNIC (para. 32).

II. DISCUSSIONS HELD BY JUNIC

A. Discussion of the ways and means of promoting better public understanding of the role and achievements of the United Nations

4. In his introductory statement, the Chairman of JUNIC stressed the need to promote an information and communication culture in all organizations of the United Nations system to reinforce the efforts of their information professionals in projecting a positive and united image of the system. He noted that, due to lack of such a culture, information was viewed by many as an administrative service and, as such, was often the first to be subject to cuts. Several members of JUNIC indicated the need for a concerted system-wide approach to public information activities with respect to United Nations reform, which should be presented as a process of strengthening efficient management practices and making the United Nations system continually relevant to the changing needs of its constituencies, rather than a process of cost-cutting and benchmarks, as viewed by some. Members agreed on the need for the United Nations system to communicate its achievements and its relevance through a unified message based on the different perspectives of member organizations, using modern technology and expertise. The representative of the World Bank indicated a possibility of organizing a training course for interested members of JUNIC in modern communications, including political campaigning and marketing, as a means of better defining joint messages and strengthening cooperation and team work. Members of JUNIC stressed the need for the information professionals within their organizations to not only make themselves relevant to their colleagues but also to train the staff at large to see themselves as advocates promoting the objectives of their organizations to the world. In that context, JUNIC agreed to bring to the attention of ACC at its autumn 1997 session the need to strengthen internal communications and develop the communications culture in all organizations of the system.

5. While recognizing that the current impact of the Internet was largely limited to certain developed countries, JUNIC also considered the increasing importance of the Internet as the fourth medium for the dissemination of information. It was stressed that, although JUNIC had already developed the capacity to monitor technical aspects of communications through the Internet, through its Technical Advisory Group on the use of computer technology in the field of public information, it needed to look into development of basic guidelines that would set minimum standards with respect to the content of information posted on the "home pages" of member organizations to ensure the consistency of messages conveyed and avoid fragmentation within the system. Several members of JUNIC, including ILO and WHO, agreed to circulate their existing Internet guidelines. The Department of Public Information indicated that the Secretariat Working Group on Internet matters, dealing with both technical and content matters, had began work in New York, with the participation of UNDP and UNFPA. JUNIC decided to convene, before the end of September, an open-ended group to prepare the text of system-wide guidelines for the posting of information on the Internet, for consideration by ACC at its autumn 1997 session. The Department of Public Information, UNEP, UNCHS, FAO, UNESCO and WHO indicated interest in taking part in the work of the group, to be coordinated by WHO.

6. Several members of JUNIC also reiterated the importance of United Nations information centres worldwide as outlets for the dissemination of information on all organizations of the system. In that regard, the Department of Public Information reminded all members of the need to ensure timely notification to the information centres worldwide, through the Information Centres Service of the Department of Public Information in New York, of upcoming visits by senior officials, important announcements and other events under preparation, well in advance of such events, in order to facilitate any information or logistical services requested from the centres. In addition, JUNIC was reminded of the need to provide limited resources to the information centres in order to continue to receive press clippings of local press coverage of their organizations. Several organizations, including UNDP and UNDCP, praised the assistance rendered by the United Nations information centres in the launch of important reports issued by their organizations. Several members of JUNIC noted that their organizations were often under pressure to use external public relations consultants for such occasions, sometimes at no cost initially, although their own information departments or information centres in the field could provide the same or better service at little or no cost. The Department of Public Information invited the members of JUNIC to cooperate more closely on promotional activities related to launches of important reports, both at Headquarters and in the field. JUNIC decided to establish a mechanism whereby, before the end of each year, members would agree on the calender of press launches of important reports scheduled for the year ahead in order to ensure their better preparation and coordination.

7. JUNIC also held an initial discussion of the issues arising from the relations of member organizations with the business community, particularly in the field of public information. Several members shared their experiences in that regard and pointed to the advantages and drawbacks of such an approach. It was noted that the business community could be approached both as a source of funding and as a partner, but that certain benchmarks and standards needed to be followed in order not to violate United Nations regulations. Several members agreed on the need to continue the discussion of the issue and possibly organize in the forseeable future a seminar on it with the participation of experts.

B. Review of ongoing JUNIC projects

1. Non-Governmental Liaison Service

8. JUNIC had before it a report prepared by NGLS (JUNIC/1997/2). The representative of UNCHS, in her capacity as Rapporteur of the NGLS Programme and Coordination Meeting that had taken place prior to the opening of the JUNIC session, said that 12 members of JUNIC had been represented at the Meeting, which had endorsed the work and financial report of NGLS for 1996. She recalled that in accordance with the decision reached in 1996, the 1997 programme of work and budget of NGLS had been approved through correspondence, while the 1998 programme and budget had been extensively discussed at the Programme and Coordination Meeting. In that context, several suggestions had been made with regard to priority themes for information outreach, including oceans, water, higher education, desertification and the recapitulation of the commitments made at the recently concluded cycle of United Nations global conferences on issues

of economic and social development. It had been agreed that NGLS pursue with the Department of Public Information and UNESCO, among others, ways and means of uploading its publications on the Internet.

9. The Programme and Coordination Meeting had also considered the proposal made by the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) that NGLS, in cooperation with the CCPOQ secretariat and other interested United Nations entities, convene inter-agency consultations on cooperation with non-governmental organizations. Those meetings would provide an opportunity for exchange of information on different dimensions of the cooperation of the United Nations system with non-governmental organizations. The meetings would have a strong public information component, including also strategic, substantive and policy-related information. Convening of such meetings would not confer upon NGLS any operational role or responsibilities and since participation would be self-financing, the resource cost to NGLS would be limited to a small amount of staff time only. The Programme and Coordination Meeting had also endorsed the proposal that in the first half of 1998 NGLS convene a follow-up meeting to the workshop it had organized in April 1997 on "Working with the civil society: issues and challenges". The Programme and Coordination Meeting had also endorsed the proposal that NGLS undertake to produce a glossary of the databases on non-governmental organizations across the United Nations system, should extrabudgetary resources become available to cover the cost of this project.

10. With regard to the strategic review of NGLS scheduled to be held in 1996, the Programme and Coordination Meeting had endorsed the proposal that the review be undertaken during the second half of 1997 and had authorized the expenditure of up to US$ 50,000 from the NGLS reserve fund to cover the cost of an independent expert to conduct the review and associated costs. Representatives of UNCHS and FAO suggested that NGLS could look into the possibility of the provision of a qualified expert and/or funding of the exercise from a bilateral donor agency. The Programme and Coordination Meeting had also endorsed the following mission statement of NGLS: "The Non-Governmental Liaison Service promotes dynamic partnerships between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. By providing information, advice, expertise and support services, NGLS is part of the United Nations efforts to strengthen dialogue and win public support for economic and social development".

11. Members of JUNIC expressed the appreciation of their organizations for the work done by NGLS and pledged to make every effort to try to maintain their current levels of financial support for NGLS. JUNIC agreed to endorse the following decisions reached by the 1997 NGLS Programme and Coordination Meeting:

(a) NGLS Mission Statement, reproduced in paragraph 10 above;

(b) Strategic review of NGLS to be undertaken in the second half of 1997. The report of the review will be submitted to JUNIC at its twenty-fourth session in 1998 for its consideration and approval and submission to ACC thereafter;

(c) In view of the public information dimension of the work involved, JUNIC endorsed the proposal that NGLS cooperate with the CCPOQ secretariat and other interested United Nations entities on the organization of at least one

inter-agency consultation on cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other elements of the civil society during the upcoming year. At the 1998 Programme and Coordination Meeting, the work undertaken will be reviewed with a view to considering the merits of continuing the work for a further period, and the review submitted to JUNIC at its twenty-fourth session for its consideration.

12. JUNIC also endorsed the proposal by the 1997 NGLS Programme and Coordination Meeting and recommended to ACC for its approval that for the period 1997-1999, UNICEF undertake the role of the lead agency of NGLS, under the chairmanship of Dr. Sadig Rasheed, Director of Programmes of UNICEF. JUNIC also expressed its appreciation for the leadership provided by UNDP since 1994 under the chairmanship of Ms. Sharon Capeling-Alakija.

2. JUNIC Information Exchange Bulletin

13. JUNIC had before it a report on the Bulletin prepared by its secretariat (JUNIC/1997/3). Several members, including the Department of Public Information, UNCHS, WHO and UNIDO, noted that the Bulletin had been a very useful means for the exchange of information on activities and programmes and urged all members to contribute information for inclusion in it on a regular basis. WHO indicated that in order to facilitate its internal collection of information for submission, it was developing a template which it would also make available to the members of JUNIC. It was noted that the Pegasus software, available free of charge through the Internet, would eliminate the incompatibility of systems used by the members of JUNIC and facilitate electronic dissemination of the Bulletin. JUNIC requested its secretariat to continue the coordination of the Bulletin for another year.

3. System-wide publication on development issues

14. JUNIC had before it a report on the item prepared by the Department of Public Information (JUNIC/1997/4). The representative of the Department noted that Development Update, a publication initiated during the recent cycle of global conferences on issues of economic and social development, had recently been revamped but needed a more solid budgetary base to continue production. At the same time, the Group of 77 continued to request, through the Committee on Information, that more information on development issues be made available. It was noted that currently some 325 internal bulletins were being issued in the United Nations system, creating the impression of fragmentation and reducing the potential impact. Several members of JUNIC indicated that they had been forced to close their publications due to lack of funding or outsource certain information activities to reduce costs. Others indicated that, owing to the funding of their organizations through voluntary contributions, they needed to maintain their separate publications for purposes of visibility.

15. Several members agreed on the need for an authoritative journal published by the United Nations which would include coverage of its development efforts and suggested that JUNIC should undertake a system-wide review of all newsletters and other similar publications before developing a proposal in that

regard. It was agreed that, at its twenty-fourth session, JUNIC would hold an extensive discussion of the ways and means of communicating development-related stories to the mainstream media. The Chairman suggested that JUNIC take another look at the series of relevant proposals which he had circulated at the twenty-second session (JUNIC/1996/1/Add.2).

C. Participation by the United Nations system in international expositions

1. Lisbon Exposition 1998

16. JUNIC had before the preliminary paper prepared by the Technical Director-designate of the United Nations pavilion at the Lisbon Exposition 1998, with the theme "The oceans: a heritage for the future" (JUNIC/1997/5). A representative of the Lisbon Exposition Authority made a presentation. JUNIC was informed that the Secretary-General had appointed Ms. Hélène Gosselin, Director of Public Information of UNESCO, as the Coordinator/Commissioner-General of the United Nations pavilion at the Exposition. Mr. Jan Ralph was the Technical Director-designate of the pavilion, with the appointment to be made by the Lisbon Exposition Authority. JUNIC noted that the ACC Guidelines recommended a 24-month lead time for the preparation of United Nations participation in similar events. Although only 10 months remained until the opening of the Exposition, the Portuguese authorities had not signed either the Memorandum of Understanding (submitted to them in April 1996) or the Participation Contract with the United Nations. The hosts had indicated that they expected to be able to make available up to US$ 1 million for a trust fund to cover the cost of participation by the United Nations system, which, for the 648-square-metre space to be provided for the United Nations pavilion, was well below the established cost per square metre of exhibition space. Moreover, the trust fund had not yet been established by the hosts.

17. JUNIC agreed to focus the presentation in the proposed United Nations pavilion on a limited number of issues within the theme of oceans. Accordingly, the Coordinator/Commissioner-General suggested that a JUNIC consultative group be constituted to look into the presentation with a view to preparing a coherent and integrated proposal by the end of July. The membership of the group, to be coordinated by the Coordinator/Commissioner-General, included the Department of Public Information and the Coordinator/Commissioner-General (representing the lead agencies: United Nations and UNESCO), UNEP, FAO, WMO, IMO and IFAD. All interested organizations of the system should designate focal points and communicate their names to the Coordinator/Commissioner-General as soon as possible. Several members of JUNIC indicated that in addition to in-kind support, members should be creative with regard to possible fund-raising from private sources, to complement the resources raised by the hosts through the trust fund.

2. Hannover Exposition 2000

18. JUNIC had before it a note prepared by its secretariat on the Hannover Exposition 2000, with the theme "Humankind, nature, technology" (JUNIC/1997/6). The Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations and a representative of the Hannover Exposition Authority also made presentations. The Secretary of JUNIC recalled that at the twenty-first session of JUNIC, the representatives of the Hannover Exposition indicated that they would assist the United Nations in its fund-raising to cover the cost of participation. In the period since, the United Nations repeatedly brought to the attention of the representatives the fact that the United Nations could not participate in fund-raising activities for that purpose. Most members of JUNIC noted that their organizations had been contacted by the Hannover Exposition Authority regarding participation; FAO and WHO indicated that their organizations were cooperating with the Authority on technical issues, and WHO was about to sign a contract as the resource and project manager on health issues (with no mention of its name on the pavilion). WHO noted that the ACC Guidelines were restrictive, for the Hannover Exposition provided an important opportunity which needed to be developed as a cooperative venture between the United Nations and the private sector.

19. JUNIC agreed on the need to take a unified United Nations approach to participation in the event and to seek the political commitment of the host Government to the necessary fund-raising by a reasonable deadline, thereby enabling timely preparation of the presentation by the United Nations system. Several members expressed concern over the identity of possible corporate sponsors and how their visibility would be reconciled with the United Nations presence.

20. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations reiterated the strong interest of his Government in United Nations participation in the Exposition. He pointed to the pre-feasibility study prepared by the host Authority for fund-raising purposes, providing the overall project strategy and consisting of either the "conventional" pavilion concept at a projected cost of some US$ 5.9 million or a large-screen (IMEX) cinema pavilion at a cost of US$ 9.4 million. He stressed that the United Nations would retain full control of the message content and presentation but that it was envisaged that the sponsors would participate in the management process and decision-making with regard to the United Nations pavilion as part of a tripartite management concept, with the United Nations and the Exposition Authority as the other participants. He reiterated that the United Nations participation would be on a no-cost basis and that the Organization would retain the right to reject possible sponsors.

21. JUNIC agreed to recommend to ACC the designation of the Department of Public Information as the lead agency for the participation by the United Nations system in the Hannover Exposition 2000. It also decided to establish a JUNIC Consultative Group, to be composed of the Department of Public Information, UNDP, UNEP, UNCHS, WHO and IFAD, and to proceed, at least initially, with the large-screen film proposal as the best-case option, subject to change, should sufficient resources not be forthcoming.

3. Revision of ACC Guidelines for participation of the United Nations system in international expositions

22. JUNIC had before it a draft text prepared by its secretariat (JUNIC/1997/7). The Secretary of JUNIC pointed out that the draft consolidated the 1992 ACC Guidelines and the 1994 addendum thereto, eliminating the overlap in some functions and, drawing on the experience of recent participation in similar events, changing some provisions in order to improve the efficiency of the operations. According to one new provision, for example, the Guidelines would give control of the trust fund to the host authority. Several members of JUNIC thought that the new text did not sufficiently take into account the changing situation, whereby the Governments could no longer provide funding for that purpose and participation in similar events had to be funded from corporate and other private sources. Members of JUNIC agreed to take another look at the proposed text and at the 1992 and 1994 texts and to communicate their comments to the secretariat by 30 September at the latest. A group composed of the Department of Public Information, UNFPA, WHO and ITU would meet in October to consider proposals received and finalize the text by the end of October for circulation to the membership and consideration by JUNIC at its twenty-fourth session.

D. Review of special events calling for JUNIC participation

1. First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

23. JUNIC had before it a report on the item prepared by the Department of Public Information (JUNIC/1997/8). The representative of the Department pointed out that the proposed information programme would evolve over the decade to meet the changing priorities but emphasized the importance of activities at the grass-roots level. He also brought to the attention of JUNIC the proposal for a series of radio programmes and asked for source material from all organizations. The representative of IFAD brought to the attention of JUNIC its "Down to Earth Radio" series, which was made available to some 90 networks worldwide, and proposed to share the material with the United Nations Radio. UNDP offered to extend its cooperation with the Department on television and video productions. The representative of the Department also proposed that, in view of the importance of the issue of poverty eradication and in order to better coordinate system-wide activities, a separate section on upcoming products and activities in the area be included in the JUNIC Information Exchange Bulletin. JUNIC agreed that the websites of member organizations on poverty issues be linked to the "home page" on the Decade maintained by the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. It also requested the Department of Public Information to prepare, for consideration by JUNIC in 1998, a strategy for the five-year review in the year 2000 of the Decade and of the progress of the implementation of decisions reached at the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, both held in 1995. Members of JUNIC agreed that the issue of poverty eradication was a priority for the United Nations system but expressed concern over the proliferation of observances established by the governing bodies of their

organizations, because it limited the impact of any activities and little or no consideration was given to appropriate funding for information activities.

2. International Year of the Ocean (1998)

24. JUNIC had before it a report on the Year, prepared by UNESCO (JUNIC/1997/9). The representative of UNESCO, the lead agency for the event, indicated that the objective of the observance was to mobilize political and public support through a major public information campaign in the context of sustainable development. She noted that time and resources for the preparation and launch of a major public awareness outreach programme were extremely limited and asked for in-kind contributions, particularly for the preparation of an information kit to be composed of fact sheets contributed by the members of JUNIC. IFAD suggested that the information programme needed to take into account the experience of previously held events, such as the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in 1994. The Department of Public Information would communicate the proposed information programme to the Law of the Sea bodies for their consideration and contributions. UNDP, UNEP, UNCHS, ILO, FAO, WHO, World Bank (through its Global Environmental Facility), WMO, IMO, WIPO, IFAD, UNIDO and IAEA (through its Monaco-based Oceanographic Laboratory) indicated interest in participation, both with fact sheets for the information kit and with photographic material, video footage and other information material, as appropriate. UNESCO would circulate the guidelines for the preparation of fact sheets, which should be made available on diskette in the six official languages by 1 September 1997. Kits would be made available for distribution by 1 November 1997. UNESCO would make available to the participating organizations limited quantities of the kit free of charge, but larger quantities had to be purchased and needs indicated in advance. With regard to video material, UNESCO noted that Ocean '98, a non-governmental organization based in the Netherlands, through bilateral assistance, would also produce photographic and video products and needed such copyright material. Several members of JUNIC suggested a closer look at some private sources of audio-visual material, including the National Geographic Society, the Smithsonian Institution and Fuji. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO had established a "home page" on the Year, and UNESCO also suggested that the issue could be included in the CyberSchoolBus project of the Department of Public Information.

3. Special session of the United Nations General Assembly on drug issues (1998)

25. JUNIC had before it a report on the special session prepared by the Department of Public Information (JUNIC/1997/10). The representative of the Department noted that there had been no direct consultation with UNDCP prior to the submission of the report but that there had been discussions since, providing good basis for the work in the months ahead. He pointed out that the convening of the special session instead of an international conference meant that there was no special funding for information activities, although the expectations for a substantive information campaign remained. The representative of UNDCP brought to the attention of JUNIC a proposal by the

Department of Public Information for additional information activities at a cost of US$ 587,000 and noted that his organization would present the proposal to donor countries and other possible donors, to be supported through a special fund for public information activities. He also suggested that UNICEF could organize a poster competition on the issue and that Magnum Photo would be approached on launching a photographic contest, with prizes to be awarded at a ceremony to be held at the General Assembly Hall. Prior to the special session, UNDCP would also organize a meeting of senior business executives to endorse the objectives of the session. Several members of JUNIC, including UNICEF and WHO, suggested that an approach could be made to the entertainment community and television networks such as MTV, but UNDCP advised against such an approach, since MTV and similar outlets often featured people who used drugs. UNDCP asked the assistance of all members of JUNIC in mounting a successful system-wide information campaign leading to the June 1998 special session.

4. Fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

26. JUNIC had before it a report on the anniversary prepared by the Department of Public Information (JUNIC/1997/11). The representative of the Department noted that the proposed information programme under the theme "All human rights for all people" had been developed by the Centre for Human Rights. He also brought to the attention of JUNIC the proposal for radio and television products that was circulated at the meeting and invited comment by all interested organizations. JUNIC agreed that those interested should get in touch with the contact point on the issue in the Department of Public Information.

5. Fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping

27. JUNIC had before it a report on the anniversary prepared by the Department of Public Information (JUNIC/1997/12). The representative of the Department asked all members of JUNIC interested in contributing to the proposed information activities contact the focal point on the issue in the Department of Public Information. It was also expected that the Secretary-General would address a letter on the issue to executive heads of member organizations.

6. International Year of Older Persons (1999)

28. JUNIC had before it a report on the year prepared by the Department of Public Information (JUNIC/1997/13). UNEP noted that the Cable News Network (CNN) had established a "home page" on the issue and suggested that the United Nations "home page" could link to it. UNCHS expressed interest in the issue of accessibility of housing to people of all ages. WHO indicated that it was preparing a press kit for the 1997 International Day of Older Persons and would circulate to the members of JUNIC a list of proposed information products. UNESCO expressed interest in the issue of life-long, adult education. Both WHO and UNESCO indicated their interest in participating in the proposed information kit by the Department of Public Information, and other organizations were requested to get in touch with the focal point on the issue in the Department.

E. Inter-agency cooperation in audio-visual productions

1. Progress report on the development of a consolidated direct radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations

29. JUNIC had before it a report on the issue prepared by the Department of Public Information (JUNIC/1997/15). The representative of the Department noted that wider direct access radio worldwide was a matter of priority and that currently 10 outlets in various regions of the world were cooperating on the project. He recalled the recent live radio broadcast with the participation of the Secretary-General. The Department also had an ongoing training programme with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to upgrade the skills of its staff. Several members of JUNIC, including FAO, WMO and UNEP, expressed interest in the Department's proposals. UNESCO offered the use of its relay and other capacity, and WHO informed JUNIC that it was currently developing a radio proposal, offering two channels for digital broadcasting, to be available free of charge, for use in emergency situations and for educational programming. UNICEF noted that it produced radio programmes in cooperation with local broadcasters and had recently supported a radio project initiated by FAO and UNESCO for audiences in Africa. UNEP and UNCHS pursued several radio and/or television initiatives for audiences in East Africa. WMO had held a series of regional training workshops with BBC and CNN for meteorologists which covered radio and television weather presentations and communications skills.

F. Report of the Technical Advisory Group on the use of computer technology in the field of public information

30. JUNIC had before it a report on the issue prepared by FAO (JUNIC/1997/16). The representative of FAO also gave a presentation on the digital photo-archiving system and the database-driven Internet publishing used by FAO. He recalled that the Group had been established by JUNIC in 1992 and that the tremendous technological advances made since had justified the move. He suggested that the Group, composed of public information professionals and not of technical personnel, needed to be revitalized and strengthened in order to take up a number of outstanding issues of system-wide interest. Several members of JUNIC expressed interest in joining the Group, and the Committee agreed on the need for the Group to meet in the course of the year and to establish a more regular schedule of meetings in the future. It was suggested that FAO look into the possibility of corporate sponsorship of the proposed meeting by an interested vendor who might wish to demonstrate a related product.

G. Chairmanship of JUNIC

31. JUNIC recommended to ACC, in accordance with the principle of rotation, the appointment of Mr. Richard Leclair, Director of Information of WHO, as the Chairman of JUNIC for 1998-1999. It expressed its deep appreciation to Mr. Samir Sanbar, Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information in the Department of Public Information, for his effective leadership of the Committee over the past two years. UNCHS and UNICEF suggested that in the future JUNIC

could consider the designation of the next Chairperson of the Committee a year in advance of the expiration of the current mandate.

H. Dates and venue for the twenty-fourth session

32. The Coordinator/Commissioner-General of the United Nations pavilion at Lisbon Exposition 1998 and some members of JUNIC suggested that the Department of Public Information, through its information centre in Lisbon, could host the twenty-fourth session of the Committee in Lisbon in 1998. The Department of Public Information expressed the view that it could not, in view of ACC guidelines on the matter, take upon itself to host the session outside a Headquarters duty station, over the invitation from another member organization to host the session at its headquarters. Accordingly, subject to ACC endorsement, JUNIC accepted the invitation by IFAD to hold the twenty-fourth session of the Committee at Rome in the first week of July 1998. UNEP and UNCHS reiterated their joint invitation for JUNIC to hold a future session in Nairobi. UNIDO and IAEA also expressed their readiness jointly to host a future session of JUNIC in Vienna.

I. Other matters

33. JUNIC had before it a report prepared by the Department of Public Information on the system-wide film and video catalogue (JUNIC/1997/17). The representative of the Department recalled that at its twenty-second session JUNIC had agreed to proceed with the electronic version of the catalogue, which would link the relevant sections of the "home pages" of member organizations. JUNIC agreed that the members would make available the relevant information to the focal point in the Department of Public Information by 30 September 1997 at the latest.

34. At the meeting, the representative of the Department circulated a proposal for an information programme for the 1998 Youth Forum, to be held at Lisbon, and suggested that interested organizations contact the focal point in the Department for further information and input. He also informed JUNIC that the Department was planning a series of information activities and would also provide coverage of the upcoming conference on the establishment of an international criminal court, scheduled to be held at Rome in 1998.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the session.

2. Adoption of the agenda.

3. Review of the follow-up action on decisions adopted at the twenty-second session.

I

Discussion of ways and means to promote better public understanding of the role and achievements of the United Nations.

II

1. Review of ongoing JUNIC projects:

   (a) Non-Governmental Liaison Service;

   (b) JUNIC Information Exchange Bulletin;

   (c) System-wide publication on development issues.

2. Participation of the United Nations system in international expositions:

   (a) Expo '98: "The oceans: a heritage for the future";

   (b) Expo 2000: "Humankind, nature, technology";

   (c) Revision of the Guidelines for joint participation of the United Nations system in international expositions.

3. Review of special events calling for JUNIC participation:

   (a) International Decade for the Elimination of Poverty (1997-2006);

   (b) International Year of the Ocean (1998);

   (c) Special session of the United Nations General Assembly on drug issues;

   (d) Fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights;

   (e) Fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping;

   (f) International Year of Older Persons.

4. Inter-agency cooperation in audiovisual productions:

   (a) Progress report on arrangements for the joint participation in international film competitions, film festivals and media markets;

   (b) Progress report on the development of short-wave radio capacity for the United Nations.

5. Use of computer technology in the field of public information: Report of the Technical Advisory Group.

6. Chairmanship of JUNIC for 1998-1999.

7. Dates and venue for the twenty-fourth session.

8. Other matters.

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Title or description	Prepared by
JUNIC/1997/1	JUNIC members and the business community	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat
JUNIC/1997/2	Non-governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)	NGLS
JUNIC/1997/3	JUNIC Information Exchange Bulletin	JUNIC secretariat
JUNIC/1997/4	System-wide publication on development issues	JUNIC secretariat
JUNIC/1997/5	Lisbon Exposition 1998: "The oceans: a heritage for the future"	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat and UNESCO
JUNIC/1997/6	Hannover Exposition 2000: "Humankind, nature, technology"	JUNIC secretariat
JUNIC/1997/7	1997 Guidelines for participation by the United Nations system in international expositions	JUNIC secretariat
JUNIC/1997/8	First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat
JUNIC/1997/9	International Year of the Ocean	UNESCO
JUNIC/1997/10	Special session of the General Assembly on drug issues	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat
JUNIC/1997/11	Fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948-1998)	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat
JUNIC/1997/12	Fiftieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping (1998)	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat

Symbol	Title or description	Prepared by
JUNIC/1997/13	International Year of Older Persons (1999): Towards a society for all ages	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat
JUNIC/1991/14	Joint participation in international film competitions, festivals and media markets	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat
JUNIC/1997/15	Progress report on the development of a consolidated direct radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat
JUNIC/1997/16	Report of the Technical Advisory Group on the use of computer technology in the field of public information	FAO
JUNIC/1997/17	System-wide film and video catalogue	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat

Annex III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman: Samir Sanbar, Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat

Secretary: Mian Qadrud-Din, Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat

Assistant Secretary: Jadranka Mihalic, Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat

United Nations

Department of Public Information	Mian Qadrud-Din Daniela Salvati
Non-Governmental Liaison Service	Tony Hill
United Nations Children's Fund	Morten Giersing Jack Glattbach
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Jo Elizabeth Butler
United Nations Development Programme	Jean Fabre
United Nations Environment Programme	Tore Brevik
United Nations Population Fund	Alex Marshall
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements	Christina Engfeldt
International Trade Centre	Janice Goertz
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	Sandro Tucci Paul Salay

Specialized agencies

International Labour Organization	Kiran Mehra-Kerpelman Niloufer Mukhi
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Karin-Lis Svarre Andrew Marx
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Helene Gosselin

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International Civil Aviation Organization	Denis Chagnon
World Health Organization	Richard Leclair
World Bank	Nicholas van Praag
Universal Postal Union	James Gunderson
International Telecommunication Union	Francine Lambert
World Meteorological Organization	Eirah Gorre-Dale
International Maritime Organization	Roger Kohn
World Intellectual Property Organization	Laurent Manderieux
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Taysir Mustafa
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Donatella Magliani-Streitenberger
International Atomic Energy Agency	David Kyd